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HISTORICAL
SKETCH
OF THE
NATCHEZ, OR DISTRICT OF NATCHEZ
IN
THE
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

From
1763 to 1798

By
Mann Butler

[N.Y. 1839,

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE NATCHEZ, OR DISTRICT OF NATCHEZ,
IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; FROM 1763 TO 1798.

BY MANN BUTLER.

(From the Western Messenger.)

THE earliest information of THE NATCHEZ or DISTRICT OF NATCHEZ, (as it was differently termed,) is furnished by the French. That spirited people, although behind the Spaniards and English, in the career of maritime discovery which so brilliantly marked the fifteenth century, soon made up for their backwardness. Early in the following century Canada was discovered, Quebec founded, and the great chain of northern lakes explored. In 1673, the party of Joliet and Marquette set off from Michilimackinac, and revealed to Europeans the noble river which gives name to the state of Mississippi.* This discovery was soon followed by a succession of enterprises under La Salle, Iberville, and Bienville, which extended the occupation, and sometimes the settlements of France, along the gulf of Mexico, from the bay of St. Bernard's in the West, to the Mobile in the East. It was not, however, till 1700, according to some French writers, that fort Rosalie was built at Natchez; others represent it as still later, in 1719. This ancient memorial of the distinguished people who first explored these beautiful regions in the Southwest, is said to have been so named by Bienville, in compliment to Rosalie, Countess De Pontchartrain. An obscure trace of a part of this ancient fortification still survives, to leave a faint impression of the romantick changes of Mississippi fortune, from the dominion of France, Britain, and Spain, to the beneficent and enterprising rule of the great Republic of North America.

The governor who founded this advanced fort in the interior of our continent, is said to have been very anxious to fix the seat of government of the province of Louisiana, on the mountain bluffs of Natchez. This brilliant destiny was, however, overruled in favour of the more commercial, though in all other respects, inferior position of New Orleans. If beauty of site, lofty hills, in this generally low and flat region, fertility of soil, and salubrity of climate, could have overbalanced the temptations of wealth, Natchez would have become the seat of the French empire in the Southwest. As it is, Nature has lavished her choicest treasures to adorn and enrich this beautiful spot. A lofty bank, two hundred feet above the ordinary level of the river, commanding a view of the most majestic stream of Western America, which sweeps far to the right and left, presents one of the most remarkable points in this region. Here, the French, with the taste characteristic of that polished people, established the seat of their government for the district of Natchez.

During the government of France, the divisions of the province of Louisiana, were Biloxi, Alebamas, Natchitoches, Yazoo, Wabash, and Natchez, with New Orleans. For French Louisiana extended to New France, or Canada. It is the district of Natchez, however, and principally while under the government of British and Spaniards, that forms the subject of the present sketch.

What the country had been under the French dominion, may well be inferred from its condition some years afterward, when the British received possession of it from France, by virtue of negotiated treaties at Paris in 1762 and 1763. True it is, that the cession was nominally made to Great Britain by France. As it was she who surrendered to Great Britain "the port and river of Mobile, and everything on the left side of the Mississippi she possessed, or had a right to possess, except the island of New Orleans."* Still the virtual grantor was Spain, for whose benefit France alienated her province of Louisiana partly to Great Britain; and the residue to the Spanish government, as a compensation and exchange in its hands, for the British conquest of Havana. Among the first acts of ownership exercised by Great Britain over this portion of her brilliant conquests obtained from the house of Bourbon, in the war of 1755, was the proclamation of seventh October, 1763. By this instrument, the country embraced by Appalachicola, the gulf of Mexico, lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain, the Mississippi as far north as thirty-one degrees, and a line due east to the Chatahooche, was erected into the government of West Florida.† This is the first appearance of the geographical term, West Florida, which had previously formed a part of Louisiana, and extended to the Perdido river. These British limits were, however, upon a representation of the Board of Trade to the king, extended to the Yazoo, or Yazoo north, and the east line abovementioned. This appears in the commission issued to Governor Chester, second March, 1770.‡ By these official acts, the District of Natchez was, under the British government, established as a part of West Florida. But the country, sparsely settled, and surrounded by numerous tribes of Indians, presents no brilliant picture at this period of its history. Long as the country had been in the occupation of the French, for more than seventy-eight years, their settlements, (as they did all over the West,) merely dotted the country. Along the coast of the gulf of Mexico, up the rivers, at points remote and insulated; from Mobile, Biloxi, New Orleans, and Natchez, to Michilimackinac and Quebec, the French settlers composed only broken strings of population. Hunting, not agriculture, seems to have been the favourite employment of the people; and too often were the sons of France seduced by the romantick and perilous charms of savage life, from pursuing the sober but slow arts which conduct nations to the proud achievements of civilization, over the wilderness of nature. No Europeans have, to such an extent, and so happily, amalgamated with the natives of America, as the French. It is the key to the Indian attachment which is shown to them above all other foreigners. The earliest Indian alienation of the District of Natchez by treaty, that is known to the writer, is described in the following affidavit of a surveyor in the employment of the British government:§ "The Natchez district is bounded to the westward by the river Mississippi, and extends from Loftus Cliff up the said river to the mouth of the Yazoo, the distance being one hun-

* Treaty of Paris, 1763. † Hall's Law Journal, vol. 405; also Land Law U. S. ‡ Idem 412. § See Land Law U. S. vol. 2. Appendix 1, p 276.

dred and ten miles. The said district was purchased from the Choctaw nation, by the British superintendent of Indian affairs, at a treaty held at Mobile, in May, 1777, and the lines as above described were marked and surveyed by me in 1779." This description, it must be observed, contains no eastern boundary; the cession, however, is recognised by the same Indians, in a treaty concluded with our government at Hopewell, in 1786.

By this treaty the United States were authorized to retrace and mark the "old line of demarkation heretofore established by and between the officers of his Britannick majesty and the Choctaw nation, which ran in a parallel direction with the Mississippi and eastward thereof." The Choctaws relinquished all right and title to the same from latitude thirty-one degrees north, to the Yazoo. This line is laid down upon the maps in our land-offices, as about twenty miles east of the Mississippi. There are other Indian treaties of 1765, between the Creeks and the Choctaws with the British government; but they alienate lands on the seacoast, and do not effect the present subject. Such is the aspect of the District of Natchez presented by political regulations; its actual living condition, its manners, its domestick government and history—must be found in other testimony. Fortunately for a curious posterity, such evidence is furnished by the memoranda of a settler, who, when a boy of eight years old arrived at Natchez, in September, 1776.

Calvin Smith, now in his seventieth year, enjoying the ample fruits of a life skilfully devoted to agriculture, has not been unmindful of the curiosity of his countrymen to learn the incidents of early Mississippi history. To the curious cares of this ancient settler, the reader is indebted for the following primitive picture of the Natchez district. The facts are unvarnished, the colouring as much so, the form alone has been changed. Where dates have been forgotten or unknown to Mr. Smith, the papers of William Dunbar, (better known by the marked courtesy of a republican people, as Sir William Dunbar,) have been resorted to. This gifted and scientific gentleman, after leaving Scotland in 1771 settled at Baton Rouge in 1776. The journal of his plantation from 1776, an extensive correspondence, (all most liberally placed in the author's hands by Doctor William Dunbar,) offer a rich mine of southwestern history, in its early British and Spanish days.

Mr. Smith was the son of a New England clergyman, who emigrated to Natchez in 1776. At that time, our annalist relates, that the town of Natchez consisted of ten log-cabins, and two framed houses, all below the bluff. The bank of the river extended between three and four hundred yards to the edge of the water, at an ordinary stage. There were six or eight families, and four mercantile establishments, in a small way. The latter consisted of one Barber, his two nephews in one firm, James Willing was a second, Hanchett & Newman a third, and Broomart a fourth. At this time no settlement existed between Natchez and St. Catherine's creek. On the latter there were only twenty families scutled. The site of the fort* was over-

grown with forest trees which would have measured two and a half feet through. There were likewise several iron guns lying about, which were supposed to have been left by the French. The whole site of the present city of Natchez was, in 1776, a thick canebrake. The country settlements were quite sparse and scattered. Next to the settlement on St. Catherine's creek, (which has been previously mentioned,) there were on Second creek, about fifteen families scattered from its junction with the Homochitto for ten miles up the stream. At Ellis's Cliffs there was a solitary settler—Richard Ellis; and his brother William was the only settler south of the Homochitto. He lived at the point of high land, between Buffalo creek and the Mississippi.

In the absence of county, township, and parish divisions, the different inhabited parts of the country were denominated settlements. Thus the Jersey settlement lay next south of the one upon Second creek, on the northern side of the Homochitto, and contained ten families; Cole's Creek settlement embraced eight families; Petit Gulf, (now Rodney,) and Bayon Pierre settlements contained about six families; Black River settlement embraced about six families; and but a solitary settler, by the name of John Watkins, lived at the Walnut Hills, now the flourishing city of Vicksburgh. Thus seventy-eight families composed the white population of Mississippi, in so recent a period as 1776, none of whom were known to have removed to the country before 1772. Let us now extend our notice to the surrounding country.

The nearest white settlements out of the present state of Mississippi, to the Natchez, were at Point Coupee and Opelousas, some eighty or a hundred miles distant, and on the opposite side of the Mississippi river. Natchitoches and Washitaw settlements were two hundred miles, and the Post of Arkansas an old French settlement, was 300 miles distant. No roads existed through the interior; there were paths to the Choctaw towns, and thence to the Tennessee; there was likewise a trace to Pensacola. The latter, during the British dominion, formed the seat of government for West Florida; of which Mississippi, it will be recollected, constituted a part. The government was as simple as the people were plain in their manners; their wants were great, but the means of gratifying them few. The only court in the Natchez was held by the commandant, who acted as judge; two assistants, a clerk and sheriff, completed the simple government, whose decrees a small garrison enforced. The jurisdiction of this court extended, in all civil cases, to suits involving sums less than one hundred dollars, and in criminal cases only embraced slaves. An appeal lay from the commandant to the governor at Pensacola. The condition of the settlers was poor and embarrassing. The stock of the farmers consisted of horses, cattle, and a few sheep, but scarcely any hogs; slaves were few, and sometimes obtained from the West Indies as the country advanced in prosperity.—Trade had scarcely penetrated the country with the inspiring energies which a good market for the produce of labour never fails to effect. Patrics were the principal article of traffick, and they were obtained from the northern territories. In 1778, the British merchants did encourage the production of tobacco; but with the government of

* Variouslly named, by the French Rosalie, by the British Panamure, which is retained in the Spanish records now in the probate court of Natchez; and Carlos by the Spaniards.

their nation, the patronage was withdrawn for a long and dreary interval. At this period of Mississippi history, it may be gratifying to contrast it with the condition of the hardy and vigorous commonwealths which now flourish upon the waters of the Ohio and the Upper Mississippi. Arkansas, Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky and Tennessee, were then portions of the great Indian wilderness that constituted the wide domain and productive park, which was roamed over by the sparse tribes of the red man. A few scattered and insignificant French villages existed at the Arkansas Post, St. Genevieve, St. Louis, Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Vincennes, Michilimackinac, and Detroit. The white man did not possess a foothold beyond these feeble points, within the first five of the above states. In Ohio he had no possession; in Kentucky he was limited to a few stations containing one hundred and two fighting men in 1777. In Tennessee, now possessing a population about equal to that of Kentucky, the white settlements were confined to a few stations on Cumberland and Holston. Yet the population of those regions amounted, by the census of 1830, to 3,010,702. If the average ratio of annual increase at 1833* for eight years be added to the above, say twenty-five per cent. for that time, the above total of population will become 3,763,377. What a contrast to the solitude of the wilderness! the barbarity, the savage state of the Indian! Such are some of the conquests over barbarousness effected by the indomitable enterprise of American freemen. There were some circumstances favourable to the prosperity of the American colonists in Mississippi, which, however superior their unshackled energies were in other respects, were not enjoyed by our countrymen in the Northwest. The Indian nations in the Southwest, either originally less warlike than the northern tribes, or exposed more directly, and for a longer time, to the arts and the arms of the whites, were comparatively harmless and pacific; offering little if any obstruction to the settlers, and frequently affording them an asylum from the vengeance or the justice of the Spanish government. "The Spaniards would as soon go to h*ll," said Man to Fulsome, when meditating the Natchez insurrection of 1779, as demand us from the Choctaws. The latter tribe have been immemorially distinguished for their aversion to shed the blood of the whites. The contrast of northern settlement is deeply marked in a war of twenty years, characterized by every feature of ferocious and bloodthirsty warfare. It raged from 1774 to 1794, the date of Wayne's battle of the Maumee. The country was contested by inches, and won by blood. In fact, the white man, without his disposition for agricultural labour, and consequent superior rate of population, could not have conquered the Indian. The success of the latter is to be attributed to his industry and fecundity, much more than to his superior art or valour. It is, however, to be observed, that had not the Indians been furnished with arms and ammunition by their British allies, the contest in the northwestern region of North America would have been as hopeless, as it has proved over the rest of the world, between the civilized and barbarous races of man.

At the period when our materials begin, the American Revolution had just broken out. The first effects of this brilliant era of American history upon these remote settlements, were the visits of Colonels Gibson and Linn, in 1776 from Fort Pitt to New Orleans to procure military stores for the defence of the American forts on the Ohio. This mission was eminently successful, owing to the friendship of the Spanish government.* It was followed by that expedition of Major David Rogers in 1778 for the same purpose, which after reaching the neighbourhood of Cincinnati terminated most fatally.† Towards the latter end of February, 1778, James Willing, formerly of Philadelphia, and who was one of the merchants found by Smith at Natchez, was despatched by the old Congress to New Orleans, on a similar commission to that of Gibson, Linn and Rogers. This person had lived some time in the country, a fellow-subject with the planters on the coast, as the banks of the Mississippi are familiarly termed by the French. He had shared liberally in the hospitalities which have ever distinguished a country sparsely settled, and particularly in southern regions. He had feasted at the tables, and had drank the wine of the river planters, as a boon companion and friend. Who could have been less an object of apprehension as a military visiter through a region of profound peace, and which required, nay justified, no hostilities against its peaceable settlers? Yet, to the disgrace of the American commission which Captain Willing bore, on his arrival, he plundered the inoffensive inhabitants holding no hostile attitude—seizing their slaves, shooting their stock, and firing their buildings, from Natchez to Maushac. To these enormities, justified by no laws of war, and uncalled for by his commission, Captain Willing added the violation of his own protections given to the friends of the United States. On landing at Natchez, Willing, to the surprise of the inhabitants, unfurled the American flag, and claimed to take possession of West Florida. In a short time he had apprehended all persons who had anything worth plundering, and who were reported to be unfriendly to the cause of the United States, in other words were royalists, or in revolutionary phrase, tories. He seized their slaves, plate, and all kinds of goods.—Isaac Johnson, Colonel Hutchins, the Alstons, Hiram Stewart, and Alexander McIntosh, were almost stripped of every moveable that was of any value. There were upward of a hundred negroes, with other valuable articles, plundered by this band of robbers. The plundered people were then compelled to take an oath not to bear arms against the United States, and were dismissed to their naked homes. After Willing had got his fill of plunder at Natchez, he set off for New Orleans, taking Reuben Harrison along with some more recruits. On this voyage, the planters on the coast, as far as Maushac, which terminated the British territory, fared still worse than those of Natchez. William Dunbar, (and a few of his friends who availed themselves of his sagacious advice,) saved their slaves by conveying them over to the Spanish side of the Mississippi.—When the party had arrived at New Orleans, the plunderers who had come from Pennsylvania, were unwilling to share with the recruits, the booty they

* American Almanack, for 1832, p 162.

† See Butler's Ky., 2d edition, p 155. † Idem ante, p. 104.

had picked up at Natchez. These new partners in depredation, to the number of thirty or forty, were sent back under Reuben Harrison, now become a lieutenant, to collect what Willing had spared.— This new scheme of plunder was somehow conveyed to Natchez, where the wronged inhabitants proved less tame than the predatory gang may have expected. The people of Natchez, under Hutchins, Bloomart, M'Intosh and Percy, assembled at Ellis's Landing. Here an engagement took place between the Natchez settlers and Harrison's party; in which the leader and five or six of his men were killed by the planters in arms. This was the first battle fought in the country between white men, after the establishment of British government.

Orders now came from Governour Chester, at Pensacola, to fit up fort Panmure; and Col. Magellan was sent to raise a battalion of four companies. These were given to the command of Colonels Lyman, Bloomart, Bingaman, and M'Intosh. These troops were soon ordered to Baton Rouge, with the increasing prospect of a Spanish war. The place of this military force was filled by a Captain Foster, with a hundred men, who took full possession of the country.

On the sixteenth of June, 1779, war was declared by Spain against Great Britain. This was the signal to the colonial officers of Spain, in Louisiana, to retrieve, if possible, the bad fortune which had so eminently attended the military efforts of the French, as well as the Spanish branch of the house of Bourbon, in the war of 1755. Fortunately for Spain, Jo-

De Galvez, a most enterprising officer, was at this time governour of Louisiana. This active commander, early in the fall of 1779, successfully directed an expedition against the British fort Bute on the Mouschae; and on the twenty-first of September, he likewise captured a more considerable fort at Baton Rouge, commanded by a Colonel Dixon. It is said, however, that the bad state of the defences aided the efforts of the Spaniards in no inconsiderable degree. By the capitulation of Baton Rouge all the British possessions, embracing fort Panmure at Natchez, a fort on Amite river, and another on Thompson's creek, on the Mississippi, were ceded to Spain: and she once more reoccupied the labours of De Soto, in his brilliant and unrivalled enterprise through the barbarous forests and swamps of Mississippi. Such an extension of the capitulation, and indeed the whole defence of Baton Rouge, greatly surprised the shrewd and bold planters of Natchez. At this point, the British had great resources both in the settlers and the Indians, upon which Col. Dixon might have confidently fell back. These interior means seem to have been unknown or disregarded by the British officer. It was no doubt favourable to the humanity of the warfare, that the Indians were not introduced into the tragedy of war, always full enough of horrors, but never so much so, as when such murderous savages as the North American Indians are made its actors.

(To be continued.)

THE richest endowments of the mind are temperance, prudence, and fortitude; prudence is a universal virtue, which enters into the composition of all the rest, and where that is not present, fortitude loses its name and nature.

REVOLUTIONARY REMINISCENCE.

AFTER the battle of Lexington, General Gage, having succeeded the notorious Governour Hutchinson in the command of the king's troops in Boston, and being reinforced by Generals Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne, issued his celebrated proclamation, offering pardon to all who would return to their allegiance. John Hancock and Samuel Adams, both members of Congress from Massachusetts, were excepted from this "lying act of Grace," having by their zeal and abilities made themselves especially obnoxious to the ministry. Of Mr. Adams, it was said by Galloway, in his examination before the House of Commons, that "he eats little, drinks little, sleeps little, thinks much, and is most indefatigable in the pursuit of his object." That by his superior abilities he managed the factions of Congress and the factions in New England." The following parody on the proclamation (which the Whigs treated with great contempt and ridicule) appeared in the prints of the day.

"Tom. Gage's Proclamation,
And denunciation,
Against the New England nation
Who should his pious way shun."

Whereas, the rebels, hereabout,
Are stubborn still, and still hold out,
Refusing still to drink their tea,
In spite of Parliament and me;
And to maintain their bubble right,
Prognosticate a real fight;
Preparing flint, and steel, and ball,
My armies and my fleet to maul;
Rebelling so, a graceless pack,
As to let fly at soldier's back,
All this, though long obliged to bear,
From want of men, but not from fear,
I'm able now, by augmentation,
To give a proper castigation,
But first, I do my grace extend,
And hereby promise to befriend
All those who do their sins confess,
And meekly own they have transgressed;
Who will for pardon plead with me,
Lead godly lives and drink their tea:
Such future conduct and behaviour,
Restores them to my gracious favour:
But then, I must out of this plan lock
Both Samuel Adams and John Hancock;
For such vile traitors, like debentures,
Must be tucked up, at all adventures,
As any proffer of a pardon,
Will only tend such rogues to harden.
But every other mother's son,
As soon as he lays down his gun,
And on surrendering his toledo,
May go to and fro, unhurt, as we do.
And so doth run the king's command,
That all who please may kiss my hand.

By command of MOTHER CAREY,

THOMAS FLUCKER, Secretary.

The name of the secretary, it is believed, is truly given, while that of a female friend of the general is inserted in the place of that officer's.

National Gazette

Our admiration, which is a very pleasing motion of the mind, immediately rises at the consideration of any object that takes up a great deal of room in the fancy.

Addison.

and Batavia, the burden of which frequently amounts to 800 or even to 1000 tons. All well-informed writers agree, as already stated, that no alteration has been made in the naval architecture of this extraordinary people for several centuries past; and it has excited their wonder, in no small degree, that though Canton is visited by the ships of various nations, the superiour construction of which, it might be apprehended, must be necessarily acknowledged, yet they have never thought proper to adopt any improvement whatever in the art. It is rational, however, to believe that if no innovation has been made in the form and rigging of their vessels, the size and burden of them have been, nevertheless, permitted to increase with the spirit of trade and foreign commerce which the example of Europeans cannot but have diffused. This supposition will reconcile the account just given of the tonnage of the modern Chinese vessels with the seemingly contradictory authority of former visitors, from whom it has been understood that the capacity of the Chinese vessels, or junks, never exceeded three hundred tons.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE NATCHEZ, OR DISTRICT OF NATCHEZ,

IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; FROM 1763 TO 1780.

BY MANN BUTLER.

(Continued from last No.)

NATCHEZ, for the first time, since the exploration of De Soto, became a Spanish territory, on the 21st September, 1779. This transfer of dominion was not, however, immediately acquiesced in, either by the British planters, or the Indians. Deep dislike to the Spaniards existed in both nations; and though this did not instantly break out, the fire was only smothered, not quenched.

About this time, or 1780, Stephen Minor, an enterprising young man descended the Mississippi from Redstone, on the Monongahela, (now Brownstown, in Pennsylvania,) for the purpose of obtaining military supplies from New Orleans. He succeeded in his mission, and proceeded on his return by land, on the western bank of the Mississippi, with a caravan of loaded mules. In the course of his journey he was attacked by one of the violent intermittent fevers, which so sorely infest the banks of Southern streams. This prevented him from pursuing his route, in company with his men, when the fit was upon him. In this condition he would lie by, until the ague had passed off, and then ride on to overtake his company at their stage, or rather encampment for the night. One day, when not far from the present post of Arkansas, he was as usual attacked by his fever, followed by an ague, that compelled him to stop. On recovering from the chilly fit, he followed the trail of his caravan, and after riding a few miles he came upon the murdered bodies of his men: his goods had all been taken off; and he left sick in the heart of an Indian wilderness. Circumstances not a little disheartening, but such and even worse were often manfully endured by the pioneers. Minor partook largely of their indomitable spirit; he made the best of his way to the post, whence he returned to New Orleans, with nothing but his own

energy to support him in a foreign colony, but a bustling time, and at a point full of daring enterprise. Our adventurer devoted himself to the acquisition of the French and Spanish languages, and this attention, coupled with many manly qualities, soon attracted the notice of the Spanish officers at New Orleans. Accordingly, when in the spring of 1780, Governour Galvez undertook an expedition against Mobile, then in the possession of the British, Minor was readily enlisted into the governour's body-guard, the finest body of men which could be raised at New Orleans. In this expedition Minor had the good fortune to save the life of his general by killing an Indian who was aiming at the governour. Another version of this story, however, represents that Hooper, (a white man of some notoriety in the early history of Natchez,) had drawn sight upon the governour, as he was reconnoitring the bay in an open boat; when a British officer, struck by the barbarity of the warfare, suddenly struck up Hooper's rifle and thereby saved the general's life. Hooper, with the dogged spirit of a backwoodsman, then swore he would fight no longer in a cause so managed, and suddenly packing up his small baggage, he left the British camp. Galvez reduced Mobile again under the Spanish government,* and Minor was rewarded for his services by a commission in the Spanish service and by the continued favour of the government. These changes were so little known in the eastern part of the United States, that Congress, in 1779, granted a commission to one James Robinson, a friend and companion of Willing, to carry on hostile enterprises on the Mississippi; supposing these western districts still under the British government. Upon Robinson's reaching Natchez, with some thirty or forty followers, he first found out that the Spaniards had got possession of the country. The expedition was therefore entirely broken off, the men dispersed and the leader died. In the spring of 1781, Galvez set off from Mobile on an expedition against Pensacola, at that time also in the possession of the British. Here he was met by a large Spanish naval force from Havana, and he compelled General Campbell and Governour Chester to surrender this commanding point on the Gulf of Mexico.† But during these operations against Pensacola, and while, with characteristic British confidence, the Natchez settlers anticipated the success of Great Britain; in earnest of it, they undertook to reduce the Spanish fort at Natchez. The persons who took the lead in this daring enterprise were Colonel Anthony Hutchins,‡ Jacob Winfrey, Captain D. Bloomart, Christian Bingham, John and Philip Alston, and one Turner Mulkey, a Baptist preacher.

This party applied to Governour Chester, at Pensacola, for assistance, through a messenger, of the name of Christopher Man. The British governour received the communication with the welcome to be expected; but felt too much concerned for the welfare of the Natchez people to encourage them to take up arms against the Spaniards, until the prospects of maintaining Pensacola were more favour-

* 14th of March, 1780.—Martin's Louisiana.

† 9th of May, 1781.—Martin's Louisiana.

‡ Father to the present gentleman of that name in the vicinity of Natchez, and maternal grandfather to John F. H. Claiborne.

able. He, however, sent whatever supplies he could spare, with directions to Man to remain with Fulsome, a Choctaw chief, until further orders. Man, however, eager to play a more active part than that warranted by his orders, urged Fulsome to push on the project of attacking Natchez and plundering the friends of the Spanish government. "In this latter project if even Pensacola should fall," said Man to Fulsome, "we shall be out of Spanish jurisdiction; and the Spaniards would never look for us among the Choctaws. Then the credentials and supplies I have," continued he, "from Governor Chester are such, that the Natchez people will be ready as bulldogs to seize the Spaniards. If we succeed, we shall have not only the plunder of the fort but also that of the Illinois boats, that will come down the river richly laden with peltries." This scheme of war and rebellion too easily won upon the excitable parties, to whom it was proposed. A body of fifteen or twenty whites and as many Indians, collected and proceeded to Natchez. An express started before them, brought out their confederates and a plan of operation was soon adopted. Every man in the district, capable of bearing arms, was summoned to meet at John Row's, accounted for service, and to march against Fort Paumure, under the penalty of treason to the British government. This was sometime in May, 1781; it could not have been far from this date, as the capitulation of Pensacola by the British, took place on the ninth of May, and this intelligence was received some time after the rupture of this insurrection. The threat of declaring all malcontents enemies to the British government and sending them to Pensacola was not all necessary to rouse the people. The British government had a thousand ties of sympathy with a people themselves of British stock, that necessarily attached them to it in preference to the government of the Spaniards—foreigners in customs and above all, in language, itself such a powerful conductor to social and national sympathies. Indeed, two individuals and still more, two nations, speaking different languages are too insulated from one another to enjoy or maintain intercourse and friendship.

The disaffection of the district was so decided that the people ran to arms with alacrity. Moreover, the idle condition, owing to the want of trade, left the people scarcely anything to do, after the short time required in this genial climate to *lay by*, or finish the cultivation of, their Indian corn. Hunting was the only additional employment. By such a people the enterprise against the Spanish government was embraced with all the eagerness of a frolick. There were not more than five or six men who stayed away from it. Alexander McIntosh fled with all his disposable property into the Spanish fort, but the planters, who had been summoned to arms, assembled as directed, and after roll-call and detailing a small guard, they were dismissed. Any of them who lived near were, with a carelessness strongly evidencing their confidence, permitted to retire to their homes, on condition of appearing at nine o'clock the next morning. Such was the security of the insurgents, and such the supineness of the Spanish garrison! The next day the commissary procured plenty of provisions for this rapid assemblage. On the ensuing Sunday afternoon, a party

of the revolted set off to visit the village of Natchez, then entirely *under the hill*. The road was covered by an intervening ridge from the fire of the fort, and on the south, a considerable ravine protected an object from its guns. Some of the soldiers, however, not well acquainted with the ground, attempted to pass the ridge in full sight of the garrison, when a discharge of grape-shot from a six-pounder in the fort, rolled them down the hill with all imaginable expedition. Calvin Smith, a boy at the time too young to be pressed into service, was looking on. Commandant Bloomart pitched his camp in the hollow, in front of the present house of Job Routh, then occupied by John Row. The siege continued in this harmless way for several days, with more noise than effect; till a small six-pounder was discovered and fixed up by the insurgents. This piece had been ploughed up at the French meadows, near St. Catharine's creek, and had lain there as worthless until this unexpected military demand again brought it into use. On examination, it proved to be injured in appearance only. Bloomart now opened his entrenchments against Fort Paumure; and in the meantime intelligence was received of a large Illinois boat coming up the river. The insurgent chief instantly despatched forty or fifty men to waylay the boat at a point, where her burden would compel her to come close to the shore, in order to stem the current with oars. The prize was easily captured, and with it, a most acceptable reinforcement of two swivels and a quantity of ammunition. The principal difficulty was that the prisoners were nearly as numerous as their captors; and the latter had no means of securing them but by compelling them to take an oath not to serve against his Britannick Majesty. The captured party were then permitted to dispose of themselves, at pleasure. Two days after this capture the insurgents were able to open a considerable battery with the *bobtail*, (as they called the broken piece of artillery,) and the two prize swivels. The entrenchment was carried within five hundred yards of the fort, when Bloomart with a glass of biters in his hand, (of which he was said to be very fond,) mounted *Bobtail* and drank the Spanish commandant's health, as loud as he could halloo. Very different from this reckless and daring conduct was that of the Spanish officer; some shots having, in the course of the day passed through his house, it drove the womanish fellow out of his quarters. Still the insurgents were too distant to produce much effect with their light pieces of artillery. Bloomart therefore undertook to advance his entrenchments in the face of a heavy cannonade. The fort was strong, the ramparts eight or ten feet thick, and so old as to be like solid earth; on the inside of the wall was a heavy stockade made of cypress, sawed, well-jointed, and too high to be escaladed. Nor was there any want of provisions for a siege of months; plenty of ammunition and a well of water in the centre of the works. For this stage of fortifications, the Spanish fort of Natchez may well be pronounced to have been impregnable to all the rude means the country could afford. But art is a poor substitute for nature in any case; and in matters of war, stout hearts are stronger than any walls. In this respect the Natchez insurgents were well armed, like the manly and gallant stock from which they were descended

like their other countrymen on the frontier, the skill of these raw soldiers at the rifle, was unexcelled. If a man's eye could be seen through a port hole, two or three rifles were instantly discharged at it. Such sharp shooting soon produces a panick in a garrison, unless counteracted by active measures on the part of the commandant. It was singularly exhibited at the siege of Vincennes, by Clark, in 1779. Yet during the siege, but one man was killed through a block-house window.

While things were in this condition, an old fellow found means to introduce himself into the fort; he informed the commanding officer that his assailants were undermining it. The information was well received and the author was dismissed to obtain further intelligence for which he was promised an ample reward. The signal concerted by the Spanish officer with this spy of Bloomart was, to ring a large cow bell near the fort gate. The emissary returned as agreed upon, and he assured the Spaniards, that the enemy were springing a mine, but he could communicate no further particulars. He was again dismissed to procure further intelligence, but did not return again. McIntosh told the Spanish commander that he knew the fellow well, and that he was a great liar, on whom no dependance could be placed, this however did not allay the alarm of the Spaniards. A cow with a large bell hung round her neck was killed by order of the commandant, while feeding on the ramparts, mistaken perhaps for the spy. A circumstance soon occurred which still kept the alarming intelligence of the spy, active in the minds of the garrison. A few mornings afterward, a respectable sergeant of artillery, reported that while charging a gun, he dropped a ball, the hollow sound of which, upon the ground, startled him. He tried it again, and again; and then called the lieutenant of the guard. This officer concurred in the opinion of the sergeant, that a mine was sprung under that part of the fort. The commandant was then notified of the circumstance: and he, with the other superiour officers, repeated the experiment, sounding with a ball and beating a drum. These trials only confirmed the general panick at the belief that they were all to be blown up in a few hours, and notwithstanding everything that McIntosh could say to the contrary, a white flag was hoisted on the pickets of the Spanish fort. A parley took place and a capitulation of the Spanish garrison to the British party was agreed upon. The terms were to surrender the fort to the besiegers, the garrison to march out under arms with colours to a certain point, where they were to ground their arms and to take an oath not to serve against the British government during the war. The Spanish troops were to be escorted to Loftus's Heights, and thence conveyed to New Orleans. Thus fell in twelve days, a garrison of a hundred soldiers, well provided with every munition of war, before a heterogeneous assemblage of two hundred and seventy men, one six-pounder and two swivels. This number was ascertained, when the plunder of the Illinois boat was divided among the captors. In two or three days the escort set off with the prisoners and when parting with them at the point agreed upon, a Spanish force was seen coming up the river. It was a detachment from Opelousas, with a large body of Indians; the escort had barely time to escape to

Natchez with the news. The return was quicker than the descent. Captain Winfrey's now (in 1838) Butler's plantation, was on the direct road to Natchez. Here the party of united French and Indians landed, surprised a detachment of Natchez people, which was stationed at Winfrey's house, and killed fourteen out of twenty who composed the guard. From this point the hostile party extended their depredations at such length as to drive the people into forts. There were two of them between Natchez and the French Meadows, about three miles apart. About this time, William Ellis was found murdered at his plantation, on the south side of Homochitto. These outrages soon provoked heavy retaliation from the settlers, and forced the Spanish party to take a position at the White Cliffs. No sooner was this movement of the enemy known, than our countrymen repaired in great eagerness to meet them. So keen was the resentment of the people at the outrages inflicted by the Spaniards, that it was necessary to draft the men who should remain in charge of the fort. Some time about the middle of June, 1781, the people assembled in a body of some two hundred men and prepared to attack the enemy, (about three hundred strong,) at the same time, by land and water. Just at this period an express arrived from Pensacola with the intelligence that it had surrendered to Governour Galvez. This news placed the Natchez people in no little consternation. Instead of fighting under the powerful flag of Great Britain as they proudly believed themselves, they suddenly by the revolution of events, found themselves unsupported insurgents against the monarchy of Spain. The plan against the Opelousas plunderers was unfortunately abandoned; and peace and pardon were solicited of the Spaniards. For this purpose, McIntosh was despatched to New Orleans to arrange matters with the government. Mulligan the commandant of the French party was placed in possession of Fort Paumure and he promised protection to all who would keep a white flag flying at their houses, as a sign of submission. Illfated confidence! What people ever found protection which they did not exact by their own spirit and arms? The Natchez people were no exception to the remark. Plundering parties scoured the country, seizing the property of the people, destroying their houses, and committing the usual license of petty provincial warfare. This condition of things continued for about thirty days, when a battalion of Spanish troops under the command of Colonel *Guardpue* arrived from New Orleans and took regular possession of the country. The change was great at first only; the leaders of the late insurrection, who did not get out of the way, were imprisoned, and their property sequestered. Among these were Bloomart, Winfrey, and George Alston, who were made prisoners; Captain Bingham was spared through the influence of McIntosh. A Captain Turner gathered a band, and in defiance of the government, stationed himself with ten or twelve men at Petit Gulf, (now Rodney,) and stopped all the boats which attempted to pass. In one of these predatory attacks he was at length killed. Many of the inhabitants fled to the Indians, where they were safe from the Spaniards. Some of these Natchez fugitives joined Colbort, a chief of the Chickasaws, and though a Scotchman by birth, father to the half-breeds of his name. These

formed with the Indians a formidable party, that stationed themselves at the present site of Memphis, on the Mississippi. Here all the boats passing were stopped and plundered at pleasure. These attacks compelled the river navigation to unite and arm themselves against the robbers. To add to the calamities usually brought on any country by civil war, a dreadful murrain broke out among the cattle; and very generally killed the stock which the Indians had left behind. Ten or fifteen a day, of a hundred head, would be carried off, after a few hours' sickness. This fatal disease together with the injury done by the enemy to the corn crop in the summer, reduced the country to the brink of starvation, by the first of September.

Nor yet were these the only misfortunes of the country; the Spanish officers, urged, it is said, by McIntosh, loaded the people with various exactions and oppressions. This course of things on the part of the government, as usual drove the Holstons, father and sons, (from the frontier of whom the river Holston, in Tennessee, is said to have derived its name,) together with three men of the name of Smith, into the woods, where they set the provincial government at defiance. Indians would not attack their companions and friends; and white men could not find them. So for fear of the party uniting itself to the predatory gangs on the river, which infested the navigation, the government invited the malcontents back to their homes in peace.

But the Spaniards now found out, that Colonel Anthony Hutchins had taken an active part in the late insurrection. Immediate means of severity were adopted against him and his estate; they compelled him to flee, and after many difficulties, in evading Indians, he got to Georgia and thence to England. Colonel Hutchins afterward returned and raised a worthy and esteemed family in the neighbourhood of Natchez, the seat of his persecution, where they still reside.

THE LAKE FISHERIES.

Few persons except those engaged in or connected with the business, are aware of the extent and value of the Lake fisheries. They are a source of production which ought not to be overlooked, in estimating the resources of the country bordering upon the lakes. There are no published statistics of this trade, so far as we know, nor any records, from which the quantities of fish put up for market can be accurately estimated. Estimates only can be given, and these may be more or less correct, according to the accuracy of the information on which they are based.

Lake fisheries form a staple article of provisions at all the lake ports. The principal kinds are White fish and Mackinaw trout. The latter, a delicious fish, resembles the Salmon trout, and are possibly the same. They vary in size, from five pounds or under, to fifty or sixty pounds in weight. Besides these, are pike, pickerel, and different kinds of bass, the *cisquet* or *cisquevet* of Lake Superior, a fine fish, like the mackerel in appearance and flavour, but larger; and the *muscalonge*, also a delicious fish, weighing sometimes fifty or sixty pounds. The *cisquet* is scarcely known in market, as they are caught only in Lake Superior, and few have been put up. The

muscalonge is not, in Lake Erie at least, caught in very large quantities, and is generally sold fresh. There may be other kinds of fish, but those named are the chief, and the most valuable.

Very few white fish are taken in Lake Erie, and we believe no trout. Pike, pickerel, and bass, are caught in abundance about the islands in the upper part of the lake, and in the Maumee bay and river. These are salted in considerable quantities. In Detroit river the same kinds are found as in Lake Erie, and white fish are caught to some extent.

In Lakes Huron and Michigan, and the straits of Mackinaw, trout, white fish, and other kinds are caught in abundance. The Thunder Bay islands, a group near Thunder bay, in Lake Huron, the Beaver, Fox, and Manitou islands, near the fort of Lake Michigan, and Twin rivers, on the western shore, are the principal fisheries of those two lakes. Fish are caught, however, at other places in the lakes. They are also caught in the vicinity of Mackinaw in abundance; about the small islands in the straits, and at Point St. Ignace.

It is supposed that these fish might be taken in Green bay. A year or two since, some persons caught a very large quantity of trout at Sturgeon bay in winter, fishing with a hook through the ice. They piled up their fish, intending to carry them frozen, to Navarino, to be salted; but a sudden thaw spoiled the speculation.

Immense quantities have been taken upon Lake Superior for two or three years past; it is said that these are mostly caught about the group of islands known as the "Twelve Apostles," near the head of the lake. But little is known about this, however, as the trade of Superior is, in fact, monopolized by the American Fur Company. There is no mode of going up this lake except in vessels of one of these companies; and the American Fur Company does not permit adventurers a passage in its vessels.

Two schooners have been heretofore employed upon Lake Superior; one belonging to each of these companies. A new one was built the last spring by the American Fur Company, so that there are now three. When the canal around the Sault de St. Marie shall be finished, it is likely there will be a rush of competition for the business of Lake Superior. Whether the expectation of those who are sanguine will be realized, as to the extent and value of the trade thus to be opened, time will determine. Furs are growing scarce upon the shore, it is said; fish are abundant, and whether there are minerals upon the shore worth digging for, is disputed. But when that ship canal is completed, Lake Superior and the country around it, will be minutely explored, and its resources, whatever they may be, ascertained.

But to return to fish; a gentleman, who has good means of judging, estimates the quantity put up for market upon the lake in 1837 at 12,000 barrels, and of these he judges 7000 barrels were brought from Lake Superior. At nine dollars the barrel, which may be taken as a fair price, the whole would amount to \$108,000.

If any cotemporary upon the Lake has the means, we shall be glad to see a fuller and more minute account of the fisheries than this—which is such as our imperfect information on the subject enables us to give.

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refresh themselves by riding or walking about in it, which they do in great numbers. Formerly this diversion of paddling in the water, used to be protracted through the night, accompanied by musick and refreshments, but in consequence of the disorders which sometimes arose, the water has for many years been drawn off at dark."

As the name and genius of an artist are naturally associated with his works, it may not be uninteresting to take a glance at the biography of Bernini. He was born at Naples in 1598, and during his childhood discovered marks of that genius which so much distinguished him afterward. At the tender age of eight years, he executed a head in marble equal in symmetry and finish to the productions of many professed sculptors. This induced his parents, aided by influential friends, to place him under the care of Ladrona, an artist of some eminence at Florence. Bernini was not long in outstripping his tutor, and at the age of eighteen he executed an Apollo and Daphne in so superiour a style, that it was believed he would yet rival the best masters of the ancient Grecian school. But this was one of the best productions of his life, it being so near perfection, that it seemed scarcely perceptible of improvement. His fame soon spread throughout Europe, and it having reached England, Charles I. sent him three portraits of himself in different positions, painted by Van Dyck, and desired Bernini to execute a bust therefrom. The sculptor finished the commission to admiration, and so delighted was the English monarch with the bust, that he drew a ring from his finger worth six thousand crowns, and sent it to the sculptor that it might "adorn the hand that could achieve such wonders."

Bernini died at Rome, at the age of eighty-two years, having won for himself a great amount of wealth and honours. Like Michael Angelo, he was at once a sculptor, painter and architect, and his contemporaries placed him upon the same elevation with that great man. He was patronised by Popes Urban VIII., Alexander VII., and Innocent X.; and was invited to France by Louis XIV. Rome still exhibits many of his works in sculpture and architecture.

B. J. L.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE NATCHEZ, OR DISTRICT OF NATCHEZ,

IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; FROM 1752 TO 1793.

BY MANN BUTLER.

(Continued from last No.)

This season witnessed a calamity, which rarely attended the white settlements in Natchez; it was a massacre of a party of whites, thirty in number, on

the Big Black, by some Indians. These ferocious inroads of savage warfare, which stain our frontier story so deeply with blood, were happily more uncommon in the Southwest, at the period of our remarks, and even subsequently, than on any other portion of our borders. The year 1782 was rendered particularly miserable, by the general failure of the crops; there was, moreover, a dreadful hydrophobia, which prevailed among the foxes, almost to their extirpation. Many cattle bitten by them died; but fortunately no human beings among the whites; although some Indians were said to have perished by this most agonizing phrensy. The spring of 1783 brought Col. James Green,* an emigrant from Tennessee. This gentleman had a short engagement with the Indians, at the Suck, in the Tennessee river; but gallantly repelled them with his swivels. The scarcity of grain in the Natchez, compelled Col. Green to procure supplies for his family from the French planters on the river coast. This gentleman had the misfortune to render himself odious to the Spanish government, by acting as a commissioner for the state of Georgia, to demand the delivery of that portion of her chartered and treaty limits lying north of the 31st degree of north latitude. Such a bold part for a Spanish subject, or at least a resident under the Spanish government, excited unappeasable suspicion; which only waited for the first decent pretext, to wreak vengeance on the American spirit of Col. Green. The demand of Georgia was, as might reasonably be expected, laughed at by the Spaniards though civilly declined. Georgia has, at all times, been too distinguished by flaming pretensions and acts of singular, if not tyrannical temerity. Her daring commissioner was confined by the Spanish government, and shortly after died.

Some time in 1782 the first two flat boats, loaded with flour, and owned by persons of the name of Tomlinson and Hyzen, arrived from the upper waters, at Natchez. The cargo consisting of eight hundred or one thousand barrels, was all bought by the government at \$40 per barrel.

The monotony of provincial existence was now broken by the amusement of horse racing, introduced by the Tennesseans into the district. These races were run, or in jocky phrase *came off*, at St. Catharine's Creek, in the neighbourhood of Natchez. So keen was the passion for the sport, that females, as well as males, attended these backwoods or scrub races, quite as eagerly as the fashionables of more refined times, parade on the course to witness the feats of Arabian fleetness. Nor was the suspicion absent, that the retail of spirituous liquors, at these races, was participated in by the Spanish commandant. The military guard always attended these tempting scenes of publick enjoyment, for the provident purpose of committing any disturbers of the peace of his Catholick Majesty, to the *calaboose*. Matters went on smoothly with an idle people; they had no motive to work beyond the easy supply of immediate necessities. When these were obtained by the light labour necessary, in a fruitful soil and a genial climate, what but lethargy or violence was to be expected in an energetick people of high capa-

* Father to Mrs. Matilda Carpenter, of Port Gibson, and grandfather to Abram A. Green, Esq., of Grand Gulf, Miss.

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